

AN UNPUBLISHED WESLEY LETTER

Kingswood,
March 3 1786.

My dear Brother,

If you will take care never to preach too long or too loud, whatever Liberty you may find, there is a . . . thing which can hardly fail to strengthen your stomach in a short time. Buy a little *cardamon at the Apothecary's. Chew a leaf of it every morning fasting, and swallow your spittle. I think in a Week or two, you will find a surprising effect of it.

I am pleased to observe that there is some Increase in your Circuit, & doubt not that there will be more. Indeed wherever the Doctrine of Perfection is insisted on God will surely both convince convert and sanctify.

If I can go no further, I hope at last to visit Aberdeen & Newborough. But I would fain step over to Lady Banff's, unless I meet her in Edinburgh.

I am, Dear Joseph,
Your affectionate friend and Brother,
J. Wesley.

*This looks like the transcriber's conjectural reading of an indistinct word.

We are not able to trace any publication of this letter, nor are we able to quote from the original. A transcript was brought to our notice, amongst some papers and letters which belonged to the late Dr. W. L. Watkinson, and there seems to be no reason to doubt that Wesley wrote it.

At the Conference of 1785 Wesley ordained John Pawson Thomas Hanby and Joseph Taylor for Scotland. Joseph Taylor was appointed "Assistant" at Aberdeen by the Conference of 1785 and 1786, and there seems to be good ground for concluding that this letter was addressed to him. In *Standard Letters* are printed a number of letters to Taylor, and it is interesting to note that at least three of them, written 1785, 1786 and 1787 mention the subjects of health and perfection.

The letter is headed Kingswood, and this is in harmony with the fact that the *Standard Letters* include a letter headed Bristol and dated 3rd March 1786.

The following extracts from the *Journal* are relevant to this letter.

4th May 1784. I reached Aberdeen between four and five in the afternoon.

6th May. We had the largest congregation at five which I had seen since I had come into the kingdom. We set out

immediately after preaching, and reached Old Meldrum about ten. A servant of Lady Banff's was waiting for us there, who desired I would take post-horses to Forglen. In two hours we reached an inn, which, the servant told us, was four little miles from her house. So we made the best of our way, and got thither in exactly three hours. All the family received us with the most cordial affection. At seven I preached to a small congregation, all of whom were seriously attentive, and some, I believe, deeply affected.

Forglen House, a fifteenth-century house rebuilt in 1842, standing on the bank of the Deveron, is the seat of the Abercrombie family, a seventeenth-century baronetcy. The widowed Lady Banff was the mother of Sir George's wife.

14th May 1784. About two I read prayers and preached in the Episcopal Chapel at Banff, one of the neatest towns in the kingdom. About ten I preached in Lady Banff's dining-room at Forglen, to a very serious though genteel congregation; and afterwards spent a most agreeable evening in the lovely family.

It seems probable that Lady Banff and Wesley had met some years previously when in May 1776 he was invited to supper, at Banff, by Mrs. Gordon, the Admiral's widow. "There I found five or six as agreeable women as I have seen in the kingdom; and I know not when I have spent two or three hours with greater satisfaction."

In the *Life of the Countess of Huntingdon*, I, 101, we read of "pious females of rank and influence" who established a meeting for prayer and reading the Scriptures, to be held alternately at each other's houses, which continued to be well attended, and singularly useful for many years. It was strictly confined to a very select circle of women in high life. Lady Banff is mentioned as a valuable member at one time of this select band. F.F.B.

WESLEY AND JOHN KING: THREE LITTLE-KNOWN LETTERS.

In his search for material for *The Letters of John Wesley: Standard Edition* the Rev. John Telford searched far and wide. Many of the letters there printed are only known from their previous publication in some scarce book or *Methodist Magazine*. It was inevitable, perhaps, that some already published letters should be missed in this attempt to collect them all. Even the portion of one in the *Arminian Magazine* for 1779 has been missed. We are able to add three letters to the standard collection from the appendix to the *Memorials of the Rev. William Toase*, published by the Wesleyan Conference Office in 1874. Toase

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was the nephew of John King, and wrote his biography for the *Methodist Magazine* in 1824. King was born at Guisborough, on June 11th, 1752, and was a Local Preacher for about twelve years before he entered the itinerant ministry in 1783. He died Dec. 9th, 1822. Wesley appears to have found him a little difficult to deal with, for most of his letters to King are rather short and sharp, except when he expands a little over the welfare of his beloved Adam Clarke.

So far there have been printed in the *Standard Letters* five to John King, three in 1787 (dated Feb. 16, April 21, and Oct. 31), and two in 1790 (dated July 3, and July 31). Parts of these are given in Toase's biography of King. We can now add the following three:—

I.

Alnwick, June 1st, 1786.

My Dear Brother,

I could easily contrive one of these two things: either that you should be stationed near your home, or that Ad. Clarke and you should be in the same Circuit. But I do not know how I can contrive both. He and you do well to 'redeem the time'—to improve every hour. Life is short, and a long eternity is at hand.

I am, your affectionate Brother.

(King had been stationed as junior minister to Adam Clarke, the superintendent being John Mason, in the Plymouth Circuit. In the final event he got neither of his wishes. He was stationed by the 1786 Conference at Bradford-on-Avon, very little nearer to his Yorkshire home, and he was separated from Adam Clarke, who went to Jersey.)

II.

London, June 18th, 1788.

My Dear Brother,

My illnesses are seldom long; they rarely last above two or three days.

Wherever the preachers are truly devoted to God, His Word will surely have free course, and sinners will be converted to *Hjm*. But what was the matter with J.P., and upon what cause or pretence did he and his Class leave the Society? Should not you strive to bring them back?

I am, your affectionate Friend and Brother,
J. Wesley

(King was now in the Thirsk Circuit, and Wesley had previously written to him, on Oct. 31st, 1787, "If any of the Class-Leaders teaches strange doctrine, he can have no more place among us. Only lovingly admonish him first." Who "J.P." was we cannot say. Ward's history of Thirsk Methodism does not help.)

III.

London, February 27th, 1790.

My Dear Brother,

'They could object nothing.' Yes, do not you remember what is written in Ecclesiasticus, 'Who will trust a man who is not married?' Yet, I should not be at all sorry if all our preachers lay open to the same objection; for, certainly every preacher should be as free as possible from all worldly cares. . . .

I do not know but you may be in a larger Circuit; but where there is most labour, there is need of most patience. Beware of valuing yourself too highly. 'He that humbleth himself shall be exalted.' In June I hope to be in your Circuit, and to find you swiftly growing, in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ,

I am, your affectionate,

(It seems obvious that King was contemplating matrimony, and was obeying the Methodist rule in communicating his intentions to Wesley. Possibly Wesley's hint had some effect, for King did not marry until he became a supernumerary, and was thus enabled to have the time and attention to devote himself to a wife!)

In addition to the above letters by John Wesley, the appendix to the *Memorial of William Toase* contains other interesting letters: one from John Pawson to King, four from Henry Moore to William Toase, two from Joseph Sutcliffe to King, three from Mr. Griffith to Toase, and ten letters from Adam Clarke to King. The first six of these letters cover the same period as those when Wesley was writing about Adam Clarke, the years 1786 and 1787.

FRANK BAKER.

JOHN RUSSELL. R.A.

* John Russell was born at Guildford on March 29, 1745. His father was a book and print seller in that town, whose son at an early age showed signs of great artistic gifts, and became one of the most famous painters of the eighteenth century. Lord Ronald Gower, in his preface to the *Life of John Russell, R.A.*, written by Dr. Williamson, says of him that "his portraits have a charm and an individuality that place them on a but slighter artistic level than the far famed portraits of that great trio of artists—Reynolds, Gainsborough, and Romney." His portraits are in many of the great British Galleries, and one of his most charming pictures finds a place

in the Louvre—"Girl with Cherries." He was a pupil of Francis Cotes, R.A. Cotes gained his fame by his portraits in crayons, and it was in this medium that John Russell did most of his best work.

In 1764 Russell was soundly converted. On the first page of his Diary, begun by him in 1766, written in Byrom shorthand and intended for no eye but his own, the first words are: "John Russell, converted at about half-past seven in the evening of 30th September, 1764." Above this he has drawn the picture of a hill, three crosses, and an open book. On September 30, 1769 he writes: "This day five years ago was the day on which I was called out of darkness into God's marvellous light, under the ministry of dear Mr. Madan, at the Lock, where I went out of curiosity and ridicule." This Mr. Madan was a well-known evangelical minister of his day, and a cousin of the poet William Cowper. This experience dominated all Mr. Russell's life, and caused him to be called "The Enthusiastic Methodist" and "The Eccentric Methodist." He certainly did many things to give meaning to both these titles. His art and his Methodism tell the story of his life.

Nearly all the leading evangelicals of his day were painted by Russell. He painted both John and Charles Wesley. He painted William Wilberforce when eleven years old. He also painted in pastel Selina, Countess of Huntingdon, for "The Orphan House" at Georgia. This was lost on the voyage out to Georgia, but it was engraved. He painted Henry Venn, the well-known evangelical Vicar of Huddersfield, William Cowper the poet, John Fletcher, Toplady, Thomas Maxfield (the first of Wesley's lay preachers), and John Newton (two portraits). A large number of these portraits were engraved, and this gave to his work popular fame. Many of the paintings are lost or destroyed, but fortunately the engravings remain. He also was Painter to the King and Prince of Wales, and the Duke of York,. Most of his portraits were of the Royal House and the evangelical leaders. He also, however, painted Admiral Bligh (of the *Bounty*), the famous actress Mrs. Siddons, R. Brinsley Sheridan, the famous Dr. Dodd, and John Bacon, R.A., the sculptor, one of his dearest friends.

He knew for a short time the poverty of a painter. His diary reveals this—"Not a shilling in the house. Nothing but poverty. A jail before my eyes." But he soon commanded high prices for his pictures. In 1786 he tells us that he

earned £600, in 1789 £1,000—"probably on the increase." In 1772 he was elected A.R.A., and in 1788 R.A. He attended the lectures on anatomy of the famous Dr. Hunter, and later, in talking to art students, said "Learn anatomy thoroughly, and then forget all about it." He met a boy of nine years old and saw his painting and said: "Mark my words, this boy, whoever he is, will be President of the Royal Academy." That boy became one of England's greatest artists, and is now known as Sir Thomas Lawrence, President of the Royal Academy.

Russell was, however, not only artist, but Methodist. He belonged to the Evangelical Party in the Church of England. His biographer says, "Russell's particular friends were Whitefield and Wesley, and Romaine." But it was George Whitefield who was his greatest religious friend. He spent "twelve hours at a time with Whitefield, and was at his farewell service at The Tabernacle. He was overcome with emotion when he heard that George Whitefield was going to Georgia, and when at Lloyd's coffee-house he heard of Whitefield's death, was overwhelmed with grief." He became a member of Whitefield's Tabernacle in Tottenham Court Road.

John Russell was not a Christian who hid his light under a bushel. His life was a constant witness to the saving grace which he had experienced. He would never paint on a Sunday, and would not allow anyone to enter his studio on that day, always keeping it locked. When the Prince Regent and a foreign ambassador came to see Russell's pictures in his studio on a Sunday, Russell's black servant did not mention to his master that they had been kept outside the studio, so convinced was he that his master would not grant them admittance.

John Russell had the missionary spirit, and we learn from his diary how direct he was in his appeal, and how he bought up every opportunity. Here are a few extracts from his diary which tell of this: "Found power to speak, with I hope propriety and modesty, to the Rev. Mr. Bund, a sinner." "Had an argument with Mr. Haydon on religion to-day, as he came to see me paint the portrait of his son. I had power given to me to speak with meekness and fear." "A good deal of Christian conversation in my painting room." He lived in the realm of prayer, as we learn from his own words, "I went into a cave and lifted up my soul to the Lord in prayer"

and singing." He tells us that in 1767, when twenty-two, he conducted religious services in houses in Guildford. He rode to town on the coach, and spoke to the coachman about his soul. He also "preached Christ" to the passengers inside the coach. He writes of this—"Enabled with much power to reason with passengers; one asked to see me in private." He led to Christ the lady who became his wife, and says of her that she "has made a courageous confession to Christ to-day."

He owed much religiously to Selina, Countess of Huntingdon, and of her he writes: "Some good advice she gave, and it came to me with such humbling power that I through grace hope not to forget it to my dying day." The Countess tried in vain to induce him to give up painting and go to her College at Trevecca.

He was a deeply spiritual and sensitive soul. He went out to dine as little as possible: he took his place at the Royal Academy annual banquets, but left early. He dined at the Literary Club, being taken there by his friend Sir Joshua Reynolds, but left as early as possible. He was afraid lest the worldliness of some of the conversation might soil his soul. When he was made A.R.A., he wrote in his diary—"I prayed God that He would prevent its being made instrumental to my soul's injury." Sir Joshua Reynolds invited him to dine at the Royal Academy on the day of the King's birthday. He wrote of this—"I concluded it right to go, which I did without being injured, but got away as soon as possible." Of his dining at Holland House with a fashionable company, he wrote—"Liking not my company, left early." All through his life after his conversion he was a witness of his Master. It seemed that with the years came more tact and judgment, and he created less opposition; but he never lost his missionary spirit. In his early days his vehemence and enthusiasm created angry scenes, and he suffered much, but never faltered.

We do well to commemorate the bicentenary of this great man. He was painter, evangelist, astronomer (he spent twenty years in making a lunar map, and he made also an apparatus for recording the phenomena of the moon—both of which are in the Radcliffe Observatory, Oxford). He was a lover of children, of flowers, of art, and, above all, of his Lord. In looking over the reproductions of many of his pictures, we see not only great portraiture, but in some of his

pictures, especially those of children, the freshness of the dawn and of spring. He spent some of the last years of his life in Yorkshire, and died in Hull. He was buried in 1806 under the choir of Holy Trinity, Hull. In 1803 he was attacked by cholera, and became deaf. In 1806 he was stricken with typhus, and died. When dying he said to his son, "No, William, do not pray for me. From henceforth it is all praise."

W. BARDSLEY BRASH.

We have pleasure in reproducing, by kind permission of *The Methodist Recorder*, an article written by the Rev. W. Bardsley Brash, to commemorate the bi-centenary of John Russell in March last.

For particulars of Russell's portrait of John Wesley, see Telford: *Sayings and Portraits of John Wesley*. What has been regarded as the original is in the dining-room of Kingswood School and a somewhat rough copy in Wesley's house at City Road. Mr. R. Thursfield Smith, Mr. J. G. Wright and the Rev. Richard Green regarded the former as Russell's work; but Dr. G. C. Williamson, Russell's biographer, thinks it was either a contemporary copy of his picture, or a very early copy of Bland's mezzotint engraving. This picture is reproduced by Telford on p. 242, and Bland's mezzotint on p. 98. He gives the date 1773 for the Russell portrait. Russell was the first Methodist R.A.—his Methodism, it should be noted, was of the Whitefield allegiance—John Jackson being the second. Telford states that Russell is said to have been converted under Charles Wesley's preaching, but this is not borne out by Russell's own words as quoted above.

In his later volume *Sayings and Portraits of Charles Wesley* Telford gives a correct account of Russell's conversion, and reproductions of engravings from his portrait of Charles Wesley by T. A. Dean, and T. W. Hunt.

It is also said that for some years he attended City Road and West Street Chapels, which there appears to be no reason to doubt. It is interesting to note that Charles Wesley's elder son and his daughter were staying at Mr. Russell's home at Guildford in October, 1777. F.F.B.

THOMAS PROSSER OF CARDIFF

The letter printed below (Trevecka Letters No. 1358) was written by Thomas Prosser of Cardiff to Howell Harris, the Welsh Calvinistic Methodist leader. The original spelling has been retained, with the exception that we print "Lord" and "God" where Prosser wrote "lord" and "god". There are hardly any punctuation marks in the original letter, and almost every one that appears in the transcript has been

added by us. A small portion of the MS. has been torn off, and the lost words are represented by x x x x. Editorial additions are enclosed in square brackets.

It appears that Thomas Prosser was a member of the Methodist Society at Cardiff. David Young says that "the first Wesleyan Methodist Society in Cardiff was formed in all probability in April 1740, on the occasion of Mr. Wesley's second visit to the town," (*Origin and History of Methodism in Wales*, 65f.), but there was a Methodist society in existence in the city before Wesley ever came to Wales. As a result of the Calvinistic controversy in 1741, this society joined itself to Wesley and was henceforth regarded as a "Wesleyan" society, whilst the majority of the early Welsh societies adhered to the Calvinistic Methodists led by Howell Harris and his colleagues. The separation, however, was not as complete as we are sometimes inclined to think, and we have ample evidence that Harris frequently expounded in the Cardiff Society. Apparently Prosser also preached to his dear brethren who differed from him "in opin[i]on in some small things", referring probably to the Calvinistic Methodists. It also appears that he had been present at one of the Calvinistic Methodist Associations, -- possibly the one held at Thomas James's house in April 1745, (Jones and Morgan: *Y Tadau Methodistiaidd*, i. 293, where the date is given as April 26th, but it was actually held some days earlier).

Of Prosser himself comparatively little is known, apart from the fact that he was a Wesleyan exhorter in connection with the Cardiff Society. About the year 1746 some members of that Society adopted the views of the Quakers and "quietists". The earliest reference we have so far found to them appears in Harris' *Diary* under April 26, 1746:

in discoursing with Nath. Price of Cardiff I had much light -- he saying how when the Power of God comes we lose all our head knowledge and schemes and marks and will and sink to nothing, seeing and knowing nothing but God, in silence adoring Him, and then we are love and above all loving all and are fully persuaded and there is no room for any doubt or desire but Him, seeing and feeling Him the Universal Power, Life, Spirit and Happiness etc. Then we forget all behind and desire and wait for nothing but Him. (*Trevecka Diaries* 122. Words abbreviated in the Diary have been written in full, and a few punctuation marks added. A letter to Nathaniel Price appears in John Wesley: *Letters*, i. 338ff.)

In the following August John Wesley spoke at Cardiff "to those who were wise in their own eyes," *Journal*, iii. 253). The name of Thomas Prosser is first connected with this

movement in the records of the Calvinistic Methodist Association held at Bristol in January 1747, attended also by Wesley and four of his Assistants. One of the Minutes reads as follows: "Thos. Prosser (an Exhorter in Wales in Connexion with Mr. Wesley suspected of error) let Bror. Haughton desire him to explain his Principles and ask him will he be in subordination to Mr. Westly and us," (*Trevecka MS. 2946*, pp. 20ff.) Obviously Prosser was in the habit of visiting the Calvinistic Methodist Societies too, otherwise it is difficult to see why they should desire him to "be in subordination" to them as well as to Wesley. We do not know what passed between him and Haughton, but when Wesley came to Cardiff in September, Prosser (whom he describes as a "dull, mystical man") had "filled the society with vain janglings," (*Journal*, iii. 318). Prosser may have been dull, but his influence on the Cardiff Methodists must have been considerable. The controversies he introduced into the Society left an unfortunate influence upon it which persisted for many years. One of Harris' exhorters also refers in 1748 to a certain Morgan Evan (from St. Nicholas?) "who had swallowed the doctrine of Thomas Prosser", (*Calv. Meth. Historical Journal*, xxix. 73), so that his influence was not altogether confined to the Wesleyan Society at Cardiff.

The later history of Prosser has not, as far as we know, been recorded. Wesley's opinion of him is interesting: "I found the fault lay in his head, rather than his heart. He is an honest, well-meaning man; but not more qualified, either by nature or grace, to expound Scripture than to read lectures in logic or algebra." Our readers will be able to ascertain to what extent the accompanying letter corroborates Wesley's opinion.

Thomas Prosser to Howell Harriss

WATTERFORD. September the 28th 1745.

Dear brother,

I am now in Glamorganshire and I did not x x x x x x x hear this fortnight ago to stay one day hear but return back but as x x x Lord order it, not as my expectation but according to his will and purpos, I am bownd in the Lord to continue hear for some time. My own soul is sweetly refresh'd amongst my Dear brotheren and sisters, and I wonder how such an unworthy one as I am is in the hand of God an instru[m]ent to bild, strengthun and edify them in the faith. in the knowledg of God and themselvs. My dear brotheren

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that deifer with me in opinion in some small things do come to hear me with light thoughts of my Doctrine, and before they go away the [y] receive light, life, love and libarty, and depart in peace, loving me, and testify and bear witness that the Lord is with me of a truth. Therefore I cannot but love them of both sids. I am amongst them as one that is of none opinion. When I am amongst my Dear brotheren that are not Enleightened in evrything in the same way, I am Draughn to be so unto them as they may bear, that they may be edified and bilded by me, and theire Dear Souls may not been tumbled down, for they are preasious to me. My strifing is always that I mae be a blessing to all, and I am not to set into them an opinon, but life, love and libarty, and if they have this they have the truth, the best truth itself, in them, altho they know not the A b c of the outward and literal knowledg. O so sore trubled I am often to see so many Quareling about the Leater [- letter]; one do say 'this is the truth', another say 'No, that is the truth', another say 'You do mistake both, hear is the right triwth' and at the same time neither of them have the triwth, which is Crist Jesus. Now I do see plainly this is the will of God for the trial and good of our souls, for if the whole world are of the same opinion in ye literal knowledg, they would rest on opinion and things outwardly and thinking they are well, but now while there is so much confusion and Diferens they are more dilidgense to serch for the inward triwth, - - they cannot reast. for there is some Douts in them when the [y] see the Lord with some of every opinon. Dear brtther, when you tould me at the Sotiation at brother James that you was not against me if I was not for weaken your hands, my heart was broken with in me to think to be in such a mind. No[w] my prayer is that ye Lord may go with them that deifer with me in ye leater; mae they know the inward truth, Jesus Christ, and may ye Lord be with them that go ofer the bridg as well as with us through the foord. I had no dispute with any alle the while I was hear but agreement. We was of both sides in the prifat Soseiety that I canot bear none of Mr. Wesley's people to dispute of theire opinon more than I can they. But I was at Dear Mr. Price of Waterford one night and he did disbute much with me and that was all our work till one a clock, till my poor soul cried sorely for rest from it, and I did myself withstand him in many things that was not cleer to me only because he was so strong for an opinon sake. I set some contradictions

before him, not as I was wholly perswaded in them more than I was at the Sotiation with you. He is a child of God, I do beleave, and I have a deseire to love him dearly, but he canot think well of me. He tould me that he would speak against me, but I would to God that he take care and doing nothing rashly Til he hear of the brotheren, for the Lord knoweth my mind, for if such report will pass, they will not take nothing for gratted; if I speak the best truth they canot reved [?] it. I am free to speak thus, for I seek not my self in it, but the glori of God and ye good of my dear brotheren. I did think to come to ye Sosiation but I am bound to be this way. I am not for parting my self from my brotheren. The Lord be with you and bless your meeting, and remember me, your poor and unworthy brother under the cross.

THOS. PROSSER

[P.S.] If you can wright to me I shall be glad throu grace. I am to stay this way for sum time

GRIFFITH T. ROBERTS.

THE W.H.S. LECTURE, CONFERENCE 1945

The W.H.S. was honoured this year by the fact that the annual Conference Lecture under its auspices was delivered by the President of the Conference. Dr. Harrison chose as his subject *The Separation of Methodism from the Church of England*. A subject which might have been dull if unskilfully handled, was presented to those who heard the Lecture in most interesting fashion. Few of his hearers could have been without some knowledge of the points dealt with, but all went away with a clearer view of the course of events.

In the printed Lecture Dr. Harrison finds it helpful to begin the story near the end of Wesley's long life, for the most serious innovation he made in Church order was his ordination in 1784 of two preachers for America. The next day he ordained Dr. Thomas Coke (already in Anglican orders) as Superintendent for America. These three brethren went to America where, on Christmas Day, at the Baltimore Conference, they ordained Francis Asbury as Deacon; on the

following day they ordained him as *Presbyter*, and on the 27th of December they ordained him as *Superintendent*. Coke and Asbury were accepted as *Superintendents* by the unanimous vote of the Conference.

In his letter "to our brethren in America" Wesley referred to the deep impression made upon him in 1746 by Lord Charles King's *Account of the Primitive Church* which convinced him that Bishops and Presbyters are (essentially) of one order.

How the needs of America forced the issue is clearly stated. From the early days of Methodism John Wesley had been charged with irregularities, such as preaching in parishes without permission of the incumbent, sending out laymen as preachers, preaching in the open air and in unconsecrated buildings, but the ordinations were a different proposition altogether.

Wesley cherished at first a hope that there would be a sufficient number of evangelical clergymen to shepherd the Methodist flocks. This hope was not fulfilled, and Wesley fell back upon a second plan in 1784, when by Deed of Declaration he formed the Conference of one hundred Preachers to take over his responsibilities. Ordinations for Scotland soon followed: and in 1788 he ordained one of his preachers for work in England, and two more in 1789.

Wesley saw clearly enough which way his Societies were moving, and made plans for a closely bound fellowship before his death. "He had constituted the Conference as a continuing entity; he had settled the preaching-houses on a carefully drawn Model Deed. He had also begun to prepare his plan for the due administration of the Sacraments everywhere, in case the scheme by which the Methodists made their Communion at the Parish Churches broke down."

These plans, though not completed by Wesley, were carried out by his preachers without the break-up of the Societies their founder dreaded.

For some years after the death of Wesley the way was beset by difficulties of which the Lecturer gives many instances, but, despite some division in Ireland and a secession in England, the main body marched on.

One of the most difficult questions to be considered related to the administration of the Sacraments by the

Preachers to the Methodist people. Dr. Harrison gives a clear account of the various discussions and disputes, especially at Bristol. The Lichfield meeting (1794); the Plan of Pacification (1795); Dr. Coke's proposals to the Bishops (1798), are all here, fully documented.

"Perhaps it was in the Providence of God that Coke failed and the Methodists became completely severed from the Church. Those who remained inside became a powerful leaven to transform the heavy mass of decent conventionality, while the Methodists who became a separate community were far more effective than they could ever have been if absorbed into the Church. There was never any formal act of separation."

The skill of the author, and his familiarity with the whole range of the subject, have enabled him to tell a comprehensive story in small compass.

These annual Lectures are now well established, and have, we believe, rendered considerable service to our Church; the series has been greatly enriched by this latest contribution.

THE FERNLEY-HARTLEY LECTURE 1945

JOHN WESLEY AND WILLIAM LAW.

By J. Brazier Green, M.A. (Oxon.), B.D. (Dublin)

This is a strong and full book by one who shows himself to be a careful and most painstaking student. It was offered, in the first instance, as a thesis in the B.D. course at Trinity College, Dublin, and appears in its present form by kind permission of the Regius Professor of Divinity in the University of Dublin. This academic origin is reflected in the full documentation of the many points dealt with, and in the references, totalling 419, grouped at the end of each chapter. A comprehensive Bibliography and Index enhance the usefulness of the work.

The author considers that this particular phase of Wesley's career has largely been overlooked and that he has attempted to fill a real gap.

The Lecture has been divided into three parts, dealing especially with the periods before 1738, and after 1756, and the interval between these two years.

The first part relates to the early career of Wesley, leading up to the influence upon him of William Law, especially through his books, *Christian Perfection* and *A Serious Call to a Devout Life*. The year 1738, so significant in Wesley's life, was marked by a discussion between the two men revealing differences of temperament and experience which became wider with the passing of the years.

The second part deals with these developments and includes an account of Wesley's doctrine of the Atonement, together with an assessment of the mystical views of Law in relation to that doctrine.

In 1756 Wesley wrote the well-known *Open Letter* to Law, which receives here the full treatment its importance demands. Mr. Green says it was discussed, regretted, championed, condemned, but never answered.

Its style and form are capable of criticism, its language continually controversial, and its reasoning logical to the point of harshness. Not always does Wesley grasp the spirit of words he is challenging, but never does he quote unfairly or do violence to a context. Given his premises and conceding his conception of authority, his case is overwhelming, but the value of the *Open Letter* lies in its witness, not primarily to a clever controversialist, but to a serious religious leader of his age, clarifying the essentials of the faith for himself and his followers. As such, the letter is perhaps the most effective statement of his cherished theological beliefs that John Wesley ever produced.

Part three shows the consequences of this letter both for the writer and for the recipient. A valuable chapter follows dealing at large with John Wesley and mysticism, skilful use being made of the Wesley hymns which show that in spite of his reasoned rejection of the mysticism prevailing in his time, and notably the ideas of Jakob Boehme, so devotedly followed by Law, Wesley had a deep appreciation of religion as an ultimate union of the soul with God, which is the essence of mysticism.

The final chapter examines closely the differing views of Wesley and Law upon the doctrine of Christian Perfection. Possibly these two chapters will be found even more richly rewarding aids to spiritual experience and devotion than the excellent matter which precedes them. F.F.B.

NOTES AND QUERIES.

850. LOCAL PREACHERS IN EARLY METHODISM—In the last line but two of Mr. Coomer's article, p 42 of this volume, 1858 should be 1758.

Rev. J. W. Seller points out that Mr. Coomer's statement that in the last twenty-four years of Wesley's life we hear nothing officially of Local preachers or "preachers in one place" except for one reference in 1788, is not correct. In Wesley's *Journal*, 8th June 1781, we have an account of his visit to the Isle-of-Man. On Friday, June 8th, he says: "The local preachers are men of faith and love, knit together in one mind and one judgment. They speak either Manx or English, and follow a regular plan, which the Assistant gives them monthly."

851. BACON, SCULPTOR. In *Johnson's England* (Ed. by Turberville, Oxford Press, 1933) vol. ii p. 85, we read "It was reserved for the Methodist Bacon to reintroduce the Cross into monumental sculpture. Does any reader know any details concerning this man? There are two sculptors of this name in *D. N. B.*: John Bacon, R.A. (1740-99), and his son John, 1777-1859)

Mr. Duncan Coomer, M.A.

NOTICES.

Any member who has no further use for the *Proceedings* dated March, June and September 1945, will be rendering a service to the Society if the copies not wanted are returned to the General Secretary or the Registrar.

It was suggested at our Annual Meeting that some members would appreciate the opportunity of a guided tour around a few places of historical interest in London. Whilst Conference might afford an opportunity for this, it was felt that any clash of loyalties should be avoided, and that a special "pilgrimage" should be arranged, preferably in April. The pilgrims could assemble at a not too expensive hotel for one or two evenings, the intervening day being devoted to the pilgrimage. Preliminary inquiries suggest that the expense, including a motor-coach, could be kept within £2. It is hoped that the services of an experienced and well-informed guide will be available.

Any members interested in this idea are invited to communicate with Rev. F. Baker, B.A., B.D., 40 Appleton Street, Warsop, Mansfield, Notts., especially stating what mid-week dates in April would be convenient. As the suggested figure of £2 is exclusive of railway-fares, it might be desirable to pool them; those interested are asked to air their views on this subject.

We hear with profound regret as we go to press of Dr. Harrison's sudden death on January 8th, but our tributes must be reserved till next quarter.